



Kupanda Project for Girls: Improving Secondary School Graduation Rates in Rural East Africa

Secondary Education For Girls Changes Everything

Most girls in East Africa, including Tanzania, face terrible challenges that prevent them from completing their secondary education. Sexual assault, early pregnancies, marriage, traditional cultural pressures and a lack of inspiration lead to low enrollment & graduation rates for girls in secondary school.

However, the benefits of education for girls are indisputable. Girls who receive a secondary education will marry later, have higher family incomes, tolerate less domestic violence, have fewer children and at an older age, and give their children better care, thereby reducing infant mortality rates. And, AIDS spreads twice as quickly among uneducated girls than among girls with some education. Suffice it to say no other independent initiative is comparable to girl's education for promoting holistic social development.

Fortunately, international attention is being focused on education equality and now, more than ever, there are many efforts underway to improve girls' education. Some focus on increasing access to school, some on teacher training, some on mentoring. Others address HIV/AIDS prevention or family planning. These initiatives can be very effective for addressing discreet parts of the problem but have not yet solved the widespread problem of low secondary school graduation rates.

Our Solution: The Kupanda Project for Girls

The Africa School Assistance Project has developed *The Kupanda Project*, a comprehensive program to increase secondary school graduation rates for girls. The Kupanda Project is predicated on the idea that girls need more than one answer to the question: "What do you need to be successful in secondary school?" ASAP believes that isolated solutions cannot vastly improve girls' secondary education because girls face challenges in too many areas of their lives. Only when solutions are implemented synergistically and address the holistic needs of girls can the impact be deep and lasting. We believe holistic support is the only path to meaningful, lasting and sustainable change with regard to girls' education and long-term empowerment.

The Kupanda Project For Girls is a replicable, comprehensive model to boost access and retention rates for girls in secondary school, thereby improving the likelihood that they will pursue tertiary education and/or employment. The pilot phase of The Kupanda Project For Girls will serve 144 girls per year for two years through practical, simple, coordinated and sustainable solutions. Once we have improved graduation rates for these girls by at least 50%, ASAP will replicate The Kupanda Project at other rural secondary schools throughout Tanzania and East Africa, ultimately empowering thousands of girls to improve their lives, ignite change, and become an inspiration to young girls in their communities. Central to the project are:

1. **School dormitory for 144 girls**, providing a safe haven in which to live and study;
2. **Wrap-around services** to improve the girls' health, sanitation and nutrition and to keep up with the academic rigors of school;
3. **School-based initiatives**, including teacher training, educational resources (textbooks, computers/computer training, science labs) and a Foundations Program to help students get up to grade-level in their studies, and;
4. **Girls' Leadership Program** to inspire and empower girls through a skills-based curriculum and mentoring program, thereby motivating young women to believe they can create a brighter future for themselves and bring needed change to their communities.

The Kupanda Project: What a Girl Needs to Succeed in School

Girls in East Africa face significant hardships that prevent them from accessing and completing secondary school. In some countries, the graduation rate is a deplorable 5%. However, no other initiative in Africa is comparable to girls' education for promoting prosperity and improved health outcomes. The Kupanda Project is a replicable model that comprehensively supports the whole girl so she can succeed in school.

